

DCI/IC-75-0507

08 JAN 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

General Wilson

SUBJECT : Comments on PRD's "Challenge Procedures -
A Proposal"

1. The following comments are submitted in response to
[REDACTED] request of 2 January.

2. Essentially, I am very skeptical as to the usefulness of any formalized "devil's advocate" procedure. In my view, it is a responsibility of the head of each production office to ensure that his analysts approach estimative problems with a "devils advocate" set of mind so that tentative findings and conclusions are subjected to challenge from the onset. It is at an early phase in the development of an estimate that I consider challenges to analyst thinking most important.

3. In the event a decision is made to formalize a challenge mechanism, I concur generally in the first portion of [REDACTED] paper (undated) which comments on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] paper of 19 November 1974, but I suggest an action proposal somewhat different from [REDACTED].

4. As [REDACTED] proposes, any challenge procedure should be limited to papers handled within the NIO system. The D/DCI/NIO should be charged with recommending to the DCI which specific estimates or other key documents involve matters of such evidential uncertainty that a challenge procedure could be used to advantage. This should be done in advance of the start of the paper since some time might be involved in selecting the proper person to serve as the "devil's advocate."

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5. The person selected should be given the title of Special Assistant to the DCI to give the position some stature and help to ensure that the challenger's views can be presented directly to the DCI if necessary.

6. The devil's advocate should be selected from outside the Intelligence Community, but he should be knowledgeable of intelligence and its uses and of the Community. Candidates should be selected from personnel who already possess, or have directly held, all of the necessary clearances to eliminate time delays involved in clearance procedures. It should be possible to identify recurring NIEs or other papers for which an advocate would be usefully employed well in advance of the time that work on the estimate actually got underway. Normally, a "d.a." would be involved in challenging the ideas in a single paper, serving, in effect, as a temporary specialist with no institutional standing.

7. Potential "d.a.'s" include:

a. Recently retired personnel who have held senior intelligence positions; names which come to mind include General Don Bennett, Admiral Rufe Taylor, Major General Dick Stewart, R. J. Smith, [] etc.

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b. Intelligence-oriented professionals from Government-supported "think tanks" such as RAND, IDA, MITRE, etc. It might be possible to obtain such personnel for brief periods on loan at no extra cost to the Government since they already are employed on contracts for which the Government is paying. Tom Wolfe and Steve Hosmer of RAND are examples of the professionals I have in mind.

8. While specialized current knowledge of the particular subject would be helpful, a keen mind and ability to analyse possible alternative approaches would be even more important as essential attributes of a devil's advocate.

9. Men selected from outside the Community would not put their home office at risk as champions of unpopular causes, and they would not be returning directly to offices involved in the preparation of future papers.

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10. Any positive results of the "d.a.'s" efforts would be reflected--but not identified--in the final paper. There should be no specific recognition in the paper of differing views held by the challenger. The "d.a." normally, however, would be expected to provide to the DCI his critique of the estimate, for review by USIB principals and their production offices, but not for publication in any form.



Chief
Coordination Staff, ICS

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Prod 3

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Comments on PRD's "Challenge Procedures - A Proposal"

FROM:

Chief, CS/ICS
7E19 Hqs.

EXTENSION



NO.

DCI/IC-75-0507

DATE

08 JAN 1975

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TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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D/DCI/IC
7D59 Hqs.

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